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## Notes and Opinions.

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**The Writing of Josephus "Against Apion."**—This treatise was written by Flavius Josephus about 100 A.D., probably at Rome. The original text is Greek, of which an excellent critical edition has recently been published by Professor Niese. The best English translation is by Shilleto (Bohn's Library), and contains about 40,000 words.

Jewish literature during the period 200 B.C.–100 A.D. was almost wholly apologetic—either indirectly, setting forth the history, religion and wisdom of the Jews that they might be known and appreciated by the Roman world; or directly, defending the Jewish people against the calumnies of their pagan censors. To the latter class belongs this writing of Josephus. It is a comprehensive and skilful apology for Judaism, directed principally against one Apion, an Egypto-Roman rhetorician, but replying also to the whole class of defamers of the Jews.

Book I. answers the charge that the Jews were an upstart nation without a history, by citing early references to the Jewish nation in the historical writings of the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Chaldeans and Greeks. It also refutes the calumny that the Jews were the leprous offscouring of Egypt driven thence. Book II. replies *seriatim* to the charges of Apion that the Jewish nation had a vile origin, kept an ass-head in their holy place to worship, had an annual human sacrifice, swore enmity to all foreigners, produced no great men, and so forth. Then the writer gives a complete exposition of the origin, history, religion, laws and customs of the Jews, showing them to have had an honorable and influential career, and to be possessed of institutions greatly superior to those of the Gentile nations.

Certainly Josephus puts the best possible appearance and interpretation upon Jewish history, beliefs and customs; yet the treatise is in the main a true and dignified defense, the best apology for Judaism that has come down to us. It is of high historical value, since it contains the estimate put upon his own nation by a learned and able Jew writing in the full and liberal light of the Græco-Roman world of the first century of our era. C. W. V.

**The Aims and Methods of the Higher Criticism.**—An article upon this theme appeared in the *Arena* for December, from the pen of Professor Wm. Sanday, D.D., LL.D. The substance of the article appears in the following extract: "It ought now to be distinctly understood that the higher criticism of the Bible as such makes no assumptions of a philosophical or theological character, and certainly none which interferes with a full belief in a real objective inspiration of the books to which it is applied. It is what it pro-

fesses to be, and it does what it professes to do, and nothing more. It discusses the authorship and date of the biblical books by the same methods as those by which it would discuss the same questions in the case of a classic of profane literature. When the book to be examined is historical, it discusses also its character and value as history; but it does this on grounds which come properly within the province of criticism, and it entirely refuses to be bound by any such postulate as the impossibility of the supernatural. If there are critics who adopt this, they do not do so *as critics*, and my own belief is that by so doing they spoil their criticism."

**Christ's Parables as Compared with Those of Other Teachers.**—In the introductory portion of his "Bible Class Primer" upon the *Parables of Our Lord*, Professor Salmond compares the parable as used by Christ with the parable as used by other great teachers. It was a favorite method of instruction, he says, especially with those of the East—Arabs, Persians and others. It was also much used by Jewish teachers before and in Christ's time. Eminent Rabbis—Gamaliel, Hillel and others—are reported to have taught by parables, and numerous examples of these Jewish sayings have come down to us. Some of them are of much beauty and point. But mostly they were artificial, unnatural and fantastic in form, and often trivial in meaning. They were also meant for the Scribes and their disciples, not for the common people. So that, in teaching by parables, Christ adopted a method that was recognized among the Jews. But while there might be some formal resemblance to them, the parables of Christ differed vastly in quality and character from the Rabbinic parables, and were incomparably superior to them. They were free from all that was forced, exaggerated and grotesque. They had nothing of the stiffness and exclusiveness of the schools of learning, and they were spoken to the disciples and the common people. They were taken from the most familiar things in nature, life, social habit and popular custom, but they were of the heavens heavenly, speaking of the highest truths, the great things of God and the souls of men, as no other parables have ever done.

**The Pharaoh of the Exodus.**—The prevalent idea that Merenptah, son of Rameses II., was the Pharaoh of the Exodus finds an alert and interesting objector in Mr. A. L. Lewis, writing in a late issue of the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*. He suggests that the words "in the land of Rameses" (Gen. 47:11) and "Pithom and Raamses" (Ex. 1:11) may possibly be "conjectural additions of some archæologically-minded Jews of Alexandria after the time of Josephus." Support for this opinion appears in the entire omission of these names by the Jewish historian who is elsewhere so observing of details. There are two other serious objections to the current theory. First, the interval between Merenptah and Shishak is barely sufficient for the events between the Exodus and Rehoboam, granting that Merenptah commenced reigning in 1322 B.C., while it is wholly insufficient if we assume 1200 B.C., as many do, for that event. Second, it is extremely improbable

that Rameses, who had several sons, raised up in his family an alien as heir to the throne.

The recent discoveries of Dr. Petrie at Tell-el-Amarna have afforded some light on Mr. Lewis's theory, which he briefly restates. Khuenaten was the first oppressor of the Israelites, and it was his eldest daughter, Meri Aten, who adopted Moses. Greater correspondence exists between the depicted family life of Khuenaten and Josephus's account of the treatment accorded Moses in the royal family than exists in the case of any other Egyptian king. The flight of Moses occurred shortly before the succession of Horemhebi, and his return was on the death of that sovereign. Rameses I. was the Pharaoh of the Exodus, Seti I. was the Egyptian monarch during the period of the wilderness wanderings, and Rameses III. was probably upon the throne before the Hebrews had made much impression on Southern Palestine.

Mr. Lewis admits that this theory does not comply exactly with our text of the Old Testament. But inasmuch as no theory has been or can be advanced that will harmonize with the Egyptian records hitherto presented, this, which provokes fewer objections than others, enables one to fit together the histories of Israel and Egypt.

**The Jews and Judaism of To-day.**—A careful census of the Jews in Palestine, made by the German Palestine Society, shows that the number of Jews now in the Holy Land is 43,783, not far from the number in that country immediately after the restoration from the Babylonian captivity. The number of Jews in Jerusalem has nearly doubled during the last ten years, increasing from 13,920 to 25,322, and now constitutes about three-fifths of the entire population of the city. Many colonies have appeared in recent years in different parts of the country, nine of them in the neighborhood of Jaffa include a thousand Jews. The colonizing movement, supported and directed by men of great influence, is assuming large proportions. The land held by or for them amounts to 80,775 acres, a large part of which lies along the line of the proposed railroad from Haifa to Damascus. The entire number of Jews in the world is estimated at 7,403,000, of which 6,800,000 are in Europe. These facts were given in a recent number of *The Congregationalist*, in which Rev. James H. Ross speaks of the Jews in the United States. There are probably more than a million in all, and with a few exceptions they are thoroughly loyal to our government and appreciative of the spirit of Americanism. They are industrious, economical, proud, charitable to each other. They generate few dependents or criminals.

Ecclesiastically Jews are Congregationalists, as they have no recognized head, no national organization with authority to make and execute laws. They have refused to adopt a creed which might be imposed upon any congregation. Religiously, the Jews are divided into the Orthodox (or conservative) and the Reformed (or liberal) Jews. The Orthodox Jews adhere to ancient, historic, traditional Judaism. The Reformed Jews are not strenuous concerning the ritual, the wearing of the hat, the separation of the sexes in worship, the

observance of the seventh day, and so forth. They are subdivided into various schools or wings as other religious sects are. They have affinities with American Unitarians in emphasizing the unity of God and in repudiating Trinitarianism. Some are rationalists of a supreme type. According to the last census the surprising fact was revealed that the reform wing in the United States is now in the majority, there being 72,000 communicants of them (heads of families only being counted as such) to 57,000 communicants of the orthodox wing. There are 533 Jewish congregations, holding property valued at \$9,754,000.

**Christ the Light of Man, John 1 : 9.**—This passage is discussed at length by Rev. P. J. Gloag, D.D., in *The Thinker* for December. The real difficulty he finds in the construction of the words "coming into the world;" are they to be taken with "every man," or with "the light?" The phrase "that cometh into the world" is never used in Scripture of ordinary birth, but is frequently employed of the incarnation, the coming of the Messiah. Therefore it is "the light coming into the world." But is the "coming" to be thought of as continuous and perpetual (so Westcott), or as a reference to the single act of the incarnation? Dr. Gloag decides for the latter view. He would read the verse thus: "The true light which lighteth every man came into the world." This "true light" is the Lord Jesus Christ, who "lighteth every man." But how? We are not to limit the light which proceeds from Christ to Christians. He is the source of light not only to saints under the New Testament, but also to saints under the Old Testament. It is of the preëxistent Christ that John is speaking, of Christ before he came into the world. Christ was the mediator under the Old Testament dispensation as well as under the New (cf. 1 Cor. 10 : 4, 9). Further, he is the light not of the Jew only, but of the Gentile, of men in general. He is the source of all good thoughts among the heathen who lived outside the pale of revelation. All good in man, all his holy thoughts and purposes and aims proceed from Christ the light of the world—all these are rays, broken and fragmentary, of the Sun of Righteousness. The virtues of the heathen, their high moral attainments, are the effects of Christ's spirit. So also the glimpses of truth embodied in their religions, and still more in the lofty theologies of the ancient world, are due to a partial illumination by the same Spirit. Socrates' divine monitor was the Spirit of Christ speaking to his soul. These men were Christians before Christianity, inspired by the Word before he became incarnate in Christ Jesus. Finally, he is the light of *every* man. Man is created in the image of God, a divine light is enkindled within him; he is a religious being, formed to love, serve and obey his Creator; there is a sense of God in the human soul, which distinguishes him from the lower animals. This God-consciousness in man is a ray proceeding from him who is the Light of the world.